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Then again the statement that "the ballads never meant to be suggestive" needs some modification: frequently the emotional significance of a ballad depends wholly upon suggestion and not upon direct effort.

The ballads selected number thirty-seven. Every lover of ballads has his favorites which, if he were editor, he would prefer to see included in an edition. In place of the version of "Otterburn" given, I should print the one appearing in the Kittredge and Sargent edition and in place of "Chevy-Chace," "The Hunting of the Cheviot"; "The Baron of Brackley" for "Johnny Cock"; "Fair Annie" for "The Demon Lover"; and "Bonny George Campbell" and "The Bonny Earl of Murray" I should place side by side.

The notes and the glossary, which draw largely from Professors Child and Gummere, to whom due acknowledgment is made, illuminate the obscure points sufficiently to make the ballads intelligible.

EDWARD GODFREY COX

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

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*The Story of Sigurd the Volsung.* Written in Verse by WILLIAM MORRIS, with Portions Condensed into Prose by WINIFRED TURNER and HELEN SCOTT. (Longman's Classbooks of English Literature.) London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1910. Pp. xi+136. 1s. 6d.

This volume consists of excerpts from Books I to III of Morris' epic poem "Sigurd the Volsung"; the portions of omitted verse are condensed into prose by the editors. The biographical notice is the authoritative one by J. W. Mackail, which occurs in the other Morris volumes of this series. In the introduction the editors locate the story in space and time (so far as anyone can locate the dim beginnings of an epic poem), make mention of the tribes concerned in the genesis and transmission of the "Volsunga Saga," and give the main characteristics of these tribes. They have also given a portion of Norse mythology necessary as a background for understanding the poem. The introduction further contains an outline of the three books of the poem used; at the end of the volume is a glossary.

Since the large volume containing the entire poem is too large and too costly for class use in secondary schools, where it is beginning to be studied, this little book will fill a needed place. The teacher of course will keep the larger copy on his desk and encourage the pupils to use it freely. Morris' poem has the charm of an original creation. The inclusion of Morris' epic in the school curriculum is no small contribution toward fitting students to understand our valorous ancestors who cheerfully accepted fate as set forth in the will of the Norns, who had no fear of death, and faced danger unafraid, who did not break their promise, and who divided fair.

In the condensed portions in prose, the editors have kept the atmosphere of the poem. The management of Sinfioth's parentage has been adroit, and yet the reader wonders why emphasis is laid upon his being "Sigmund's foster-son" rather than "Signy's son." This point is largely treated in Wagner's "Nibelung Ring," where nature performs the miracle, and truth to the old idea is no easy matter in this instance. Again the reader wonders why no mention is made of Book IV, which bears the sequence of Sigurd's life as

Book I does his antecedents. The reader somehow demands more knowledge of the curse of the gold. Did it go on? Was it ended? How? What became of Gudrun? Of Grinhild? How was the Nibelung tribe destroyed? Wagner shows the importance of this theme also. Since there are only one hundred and twenty-five pages given to the poem in their book, the editors must have had other reasons than a lack of space for what seem unfortunate omissions.

Some note giving an idea of the growth and main characteristics of the epic seems to the writer an absolute necessity in order to set the mind of a secondary-school student straight in the study of such a poem as "Sigurd the Volsung."

CHARITY DYE

THE SHORTRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

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*Syntax of the French Verb.* By EDWARD C. ARMSTRONG. With exercises by DE LA WARR B. EASTER. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1909. Pp. 192. \$0.90.

There will always be a great diversity of opinion as to how to acquire a foreign language, and as to what constitutes acquirement. But most sensible people—possibly I should say teachers—will probably agree that, whatever the method, the process is bound to be a lengthy and laborious one. By laborious I do not necessarily mean irksome and full of drudgery, but rather that the process will be one that calls for patience and diligence. It is evidently from such a notion as this, based on a well-founded belief that the French verb presents peculiar difficulties to the learner, that the present text has been prepared.

At the very beginning the author has made it plain that the book is not a composition book, but a reference book, yet the exercises which constitute the last forty-three pages give opportunity for drill and test. Used in connection with written work for advanced pupils the text is sure to meet with favor.

The book is well made. This applies in the first place to the mechanical makeup; the type, arrangement, and other details of composition make the page attractive to the eye. But the book is well made in a better sense—it is a scholarly and painstaking treatment of the verb in its varying relations and uses. And this is no easy thing in a language which presents such a difference between the colloquial and the literary style as French does.

A rational scheme is followed in the arrangement of subject-matter; some twenty-four pages are given to a discussion and illustration of the verb in its common uses, relations, and agreements; then come fifty pages or more devoted to tense and mood. The subjunctive, the *bête noir* of teachers and pupils, is treated in a very practical and successful way, especially if reinforced by abundant drill in composition. The remaining thirty pages deal largely with the infinitive, and here again one notices the excellence of the author's work.

Taken all in all, the book forms a desirable help to the study of French in classes where the aim is exactness and thoroughness.

R. CLYDE FORD

MICHIGAN STATE NORMAL COLLEGE  
YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN